

Sacramento receives prestigious solar cities grant

Grant will lead to efficiency in Sacramento and region

By ALEX BULLER
Aggie News Writer

On Mar. 28, Sacramento and 11 other U.S. cities were awarded with a \$200,000, two-year Solar America Cities grant from the U.S. Department of Energy.

"It's a very prestigious award we got from the Department of Energy," said the assistant planner with the Sacramento Development Services Department, Jamie Cutlip. "It's a great honor and with this money we'll be able to work on bringing different solar initiatives forward in Sacramento."

Sacramento was chosen as a solar city out of a pool of over 30 applicants because it had been working on a number of policies that support solar power indirectly within the past year, in addition to having solar panels on a number of buildings in the city.

"We actually have developed a sustainability master plan and an implementation plan for the city so there has been a lot of stuff happening in the background that supports taking this next step within solar [power]," she said. "We are in the process of updating the general plan with many components of it calling for means for renewable energy and energy efficiency as we move forward in the city of Sacramento."

The grant is specifically going to be directed toward the Sacramento Solar Access proposal, which incorporates three different city departments including the General Services Department, Department of Development Services and Economic Development Department.

The General Services department will

on top and then have the surrounding area's businesses and residents use energy from them.

Development Services will be looking at city zoning ordinances and what they need to change to make them compliant with solar access. The Economic Development department will be working toward bringing green-collar jobs to the Sacramento region along with working with Los Rios Community College district to implement a solar technician education program.

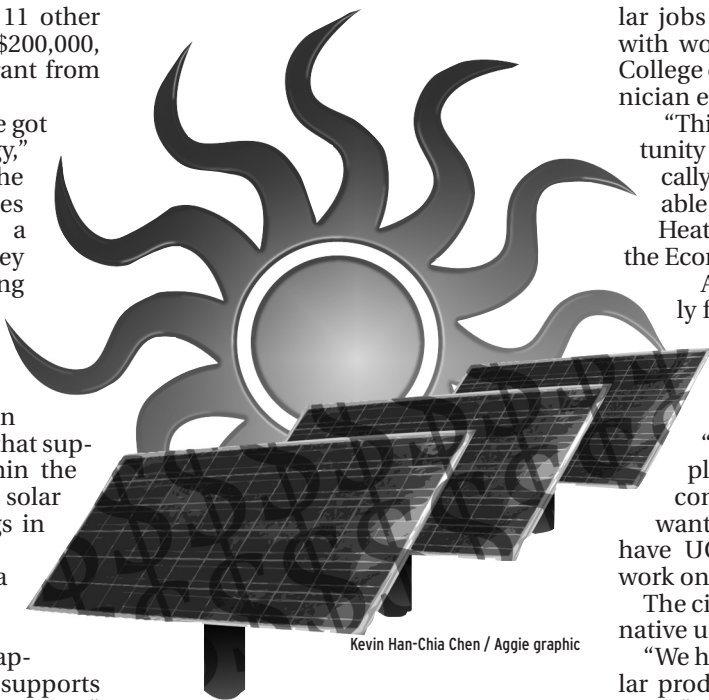
"This grant provides us with an opportunity to increase the availability of locally and regionally produced renewable energy," said Sacramento's mayor, Heather Fargo, in a press release from the Economic Development Department.

Although the grant is specifically for Sacramento, one of the criteria is how it will extend beyond the city to neighboring areas.

"It's a huge plus to have UC Davis in the region," said Cutlip. "There are so many smart people and emerging technologies that come out of the university and we want the solar market to be here and have UCD students stay in the area to work on these initiatives."

The city of Davis is also looking for alternative uses for solar energy.

"We had one of the first utility scaled solar production plants on the outskirts of town," said Mitch Sears, open space coordinator at the Parks and Community Services Department. "Now we are looking for options to increase the amount of solar energy produced locally."



Kevin Han-Chia Chen / Aggie graphic

be identifying a third-party purchase, which means they will evaluate city facilities for the use of solar power. If the buildings are sufficient for solar power, the city will place photovoltaic systems

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Students avoid rising textbook prices by renting books online

By GINA BELMONTE
The Santa Clara (Santa Clara U.)

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — With college textbook prices rising at twice the rate of inflation, students have sought alternatives to keep textbook costs from emptying their pockets. Textbook prices in university bookstores increase annually by about 6 percent per year, according to a study by the U.S. Government Accountability Office.

Circumventing campus bookstores, some students have turned to the used-book market online, and recently a new alternative has emerged: textbook renting.

Since 2006, book rental services have sprung up as a way to help students save money on textbooks, as much as 60 to 80 percent, the services claim. Santa Clara University offers no textbook rental system, and few universities do.

Approximately 25 colleges and universities in the nation offer textbook rental programs, but that is still less than 1 percent of higher education institutions, according to the Illinois Board of Higher Education.

With new editions released annually, keeping textbook prices high, students spend an average of \$898 on textbooks each year, according to the GOA. Still, the high prices may be preventing students from purchasing some books altogether. The National Association of College Stores found that nearly 60 percent of students nationwide do not buy all the required course materials.

For students who attend a university without these book-rental programs, online services are replacing the traditional book-buying process. The handful of online services available also try to win over consumers by pledging to be eco-friendly in their attempts to recycle and reuse textbooks.

Chegg.com, an online book rental service based in Santa Clara, Calif., plants one tree for every book rental. Launched in July 2007, Chegg has student subscribers from over

1,000 campuses nationwide and has helped plant over 100 acres of trees in cooperation with Eco-Libris, a member of the Sustainable Business Network of Greater Philadelphia dedicated to reforestation.

Frustrated with the rising costs of textbooks, Chegg co-founder Osman Rashid came up with the idea to start up a textbook rental company while attending the University of Minnesota. Rashid teamed up with fellow student Aayush Phumbhra, vice president of Chegg, to make textbooks more affordable.

Chegg's collection includes millions of titles, but the company focuses on the most popular titles used nationwide in introductory courses, said Maria Reiling, vice president of marketing at Chegg.

Often times, Chegg rental prices are half the price of used books at the university bookstore. For example, "Looking Out/Looking In," the text required for the introduction to interpersonal communication course, rents at \$35.13 at Chegg, compared to the bookstore used price of \$73.15 and the new price of \$98.35. "International Politics on the World Stage," the book required for the introduction to international relations course, rents at \$22.80 on Chegg, while the bookstore sells it for \$48.75 used and \$65 new.

Books are typically rented and reused two to three times, said Reiling. Chegg is sponsored by venture partners Mike Maples and Sam Spadafora, and has partners in the publishing industry.

Ultimately, it is the publishing industry that sets book prices, said Deborah Kendall, manager of the campus bookstore.

Prices increase according to rising costs of paper, manual labor and production, and other factors. All in all, the bookstore only makes about 2 percent net profit from the sale of books, Kendall said. Chegg, a for-profit company, declined to disclose its profits or revenue.

Panelists stress necessity of trust, sincerity in Tibet

By AUDREY McGOWAN
The Chronicle (Duke)

DURHAM, N.C. — Despite recent national and on-campus tension, the four panelists who spoke at Wednesday night's "A Conversation on Tibet," sponsored by the Duke University Asian/Pacific Studies Institute, stressed overcoming divisive issues and looking for a practical solution to an issue of global significance.

Gang Yue, a Chinese citizen and chair of the Department of Asian Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, spoke about the importance of trusting in the sincerity of the Dalai Lama. He also warned against racial tensions

that he said the Tibetan riots had created.

"Do not fight racism with racism. If you do that you play right into the hands of extremists on both sides," he said. "Racism is contagious and no one is immune to that disease."

Sisters Losang Rabgey, an explorer for National Geographic, and Tashi Rabgey, lecturer and director of the University of Virginia's Contemporary Tibetan Studies Initiative, both emphasized the importance of preserving Tibetan culture through educating the region's children, rather than focusing on recent talk of an Olympic boycott.

Scott Savitt, Trinity '85 and a

former reporter for United Press International and the Los Angeles Times in China, said it was important to separate Chinese policy from Chinese people.

"The Chinese government is doing this, not the Chinese people," he said. "It is so important to make this distinction. These words are what are hurting people. We all have to be so careful of the words we use."

Others said they also thought panelists avoided potentially controversial topics.

"I felt the panelists skirted around issues for the sake of political correctness," freshman Jack Zhang said.

Panelists did disagree on whether or not the Chinese government was committing "cul-

tural genocide" in Tibet. Tashi Rabgey criticized the Chinese government for excluding the Tibetan language from school systems.

However, Yue said no genocide was occurring, noting that thousands of languages had disappeared naturally in the past century.

The panelists recognized the suffering of the Tibetan people and the importance of resolving the issue for individuals whose lives had been affected by the recent riots.

"These are human-scale problems and we need human-made solutions," Tashi Rabgey said. "We need the best of Tibetans, the best of Chinese, the best of people all around the world."

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